

FELLOW-CITIZENS:

AT this alarming, and indeed very critical, period, it is necessary for every man, however humble may be his station; to lend his aid, towards retrieving his Country from the calamities in which the unhappy divisions of party have driven her. The time of Election of Representatives to Parliament is that, in which the Body of the People have an opportunity of shewing their public Virtue, their public Spirit.

That opportunity now offers itself; and you are answerable to yourselves and to posterity, if you abuse the power confined to you. It is the misfortune of Electors far removed from the scene of Action, that they are dictated to, and even understd, through the medium of others.

It is your good fortune to be so circumstanced, in point of immediate information, as to be able to judge for yourselves.

You are not the slaves of the understandings of other men. You ought to be above the dictation of the proudest Merchant, or body of Merchants, that exist.

If, through any partial favour or self-interest, any Merchant or body of Merchants recommend to me a Candidate, for the preservation of my dearest Rights; whatever deference I may pay to their opinion, there is something further than their recommendation, which should direct my choice.

I will enquire whether the Candidate has had any dealings with the public? and whether, in those dealings, he has acquitted himself with honour to himself, and an attention to the good of his Country?

I would also, as a Trader, be particularly anxious to know, whether, in his private transactions, the Candidate stands unimpeached, of any designs to defraud his fellow Traders?

If, in either of those instances, he will not bear the touch of Inquiry; not all the entreaties of Friends, or obligations to Customers, should prevail on me to prostitute my honest Vote.

Now, for the Application: Mr. RICHARD ATKINSON has been recommended to you by a meeting at the London Tavern.

You all know this man has had concerns with the Public, in Contracts for Rum and Ships, to the amount of Millions; and you all know so well how he acquitted himself of his Public Trust; that I need offer nothing more to your observation than that an eminent Planter of Jamaica declared in his place, in the House of Commons, that he would have executed the Contract for Rum, at half the Price that ATKINSON and ROBINSON, cribbed from the Public Purse.

Of the probity of his private Transactions I will give only the following instance, as the most hardy and best authenticated that occurs to me.

In the Year 1779, Mr. ATKINSON contracted with Mr. COULSON of SCARBOROUGH; a man of fair character, but of fortune very restricted, for a Ship called the *Venus*, and with Mr. SPEDDING of WHITEHAVEN, for a Ship called the *Monarch*, and sent them on a Voyage to Jamaica to bring home a cargo of Sugar. In the charter parties, liberty was given to let them into the service of Government.

When the unfortunate expedition to the Spanish Main was meditated, General Dalling, the then Governor of Jamaica, took up several vessels as transports, for the conveyance of the troops, stores, &c. Among these were the *Venus* and *Monarch*: the charter parties were dated 19th March, 1780. Among other stipulations one was that, if the Ships should, by any means be lost, the Governor should pay for them at the following rates;

For the <i>Venus</i>	£3500
For the <i>Monarch</i>	£3300

"Being the same valuation which Atkinson was by the charter parties bound to pay the Owners." Another stipulation was, that ATKINSON should be paid the supposed difference in freight, between these chartered Ships and others, which might bring home his Sugars on specific freights, amounting to £921, which on that day was paid to his Agent, and by him immediately remitted to ATKINSON, who not approving of the Agents calculation, sent out another, whereby the difference was stated to be £2023. 9s. 10d. which Governor Dalling submitted to; and to make up that sum actually paid to ATKINSON's Agent on the 1st of February 1781, £1102. 9s. 10d. This certain profit ATKINSON retains in his purse at the present hour.

Although the fate of the two Ships was nearly similar, the case of the *Venus*, as being that which came to decision, shall be the subject of the following narrative.

This Vessel lost the whole of her Crew by mortality, except the Carpenter, and was so eaten by worms, that she was burnt, by order of the Commanding Officer on the 23d of September, 1780.

On the 4th of November following, the Agent of ATKINSON in Jamaica writes to him to acquaint him with the loss of the vessel.—The terms on which she had been let they had long before advised.

On the 5th of January, 1781, ATKINSON advises Mr. WILKINSON, the Receiver of the Treasury, without informing him of the agreement that existed with General Dalling for the payment of £3500 in case of loss.

In the beginning of March, 1781, Coulson received a letter from the surviving Carpenter, dated from the Spanish Main, stating the calamity which had befallen the *Venus*, and advising Coulson not to settle for her, unless Government paid for her.

Immediately on receipt of this letter, Coulson wrote to Atkinson, supplicating the exertion of his interest with the Treasury, for the payment of the value of his Ship: to which he received the following answer:

"The Treasury have nothing to do with her, she having been continued upon her Jamaica voyage on our own account, as you would doubtless be insured, you will have a clear right to recover your loss, which would fall on the underwriters, and not on the Public. Had the Ship been lost, or rather condemned, under the same circumstances in any branch of Government service."

Upon the return to Jamaica of the few survivors from the fatal expedition, the Agent of ATKINSON in Jamaica made a demand for the value of the two Ships, the *Venus* and *Monarch*; the Governor for some reason demurred to the payment, which obliged the Agent of ATKINSON to bring an action in his Name, for the £6800 for the two Ships, for which sums he had a verdict, and which he actually received, on the 21st of August, 1781, by bills on the Treasury, payable to ATKINSON, and remitted to him.

In the mean time Mr. COULSON's applications to ATKINSON were frequent; to which he received answers of only evasion and duplicity. He, ATKINSON, carefully concealing every part of the terms of the transactions with General DALLING.

Thus matters stood, until the arrival of Governor DALLING in March, 1782.

Upon application to the Governor, he immediately said that he had paid for those Ships by Bills on the Treasury in August, 1781. He referred to his accounts and vouchers at the Treasury, and with an integrity which became him, offered to appear to evince the facts.

The Owner's Agent applied to the Treasury, the Pay Office, and Bank, to trace the transaction, all which offices lent their aid to the discovery.

Thus armed, COULSON brought an action in May, 1782. ATKINSON, uninformed of the discoveries made by COULSON, had the confidence to stand a trial, which came on in July, 1782. The defence set up at the trial is curious.

1st. ATKINSON endeavours to find error in the form of the Action; that failing, he requires proof of payment of the money to his Agent in Jamaica; this proof Governor Dalling furnished. Mr. Bearcroft (with ATKINSON sitting at his elbow) then driven to his last shift, said with a kind of triumph, "You must prove that we have received the money here." Unluckily for his Client the bills were produced by a Clerk from the Pay Office, with Atkinson's receipt on the back. The Council hung his head, and dropped his brief in torpid amazement.

The result need not be told—a verdict under the direction of Lord Mansfield with indignation, for the £3500, with interest and costs.—Upon this transaction, there can be no difference in opinion among men.

It must be allowed, first, that it is as glaring an act of moral turpitude, as ever was attempted.

Secondly, That the Author of it is not deserving of public or private confidence.

THE JURY WERE,

Thomas Gorman,	Robert Nixon,	Alexander Champion,	Edward Griffin,
James Sanderson,	Peter Turquand,	Henry Hanson,	Richard Broster,
William Palmer,	Benjamin Lutkins,	William Hodgson,	Charles Bonner.

With regard to Mr. SPEDDING, having never heard of the agreement with Governor DALLING, or the loss of the Ship in the service of Government, he finally settled with ATKINSON his account of freight, and was paid the ballance in July, 1781.

But the trial of the *Venus* having brought to light facts before unknown to him, particularly the receipt of ATKINSON's Agent, dated 21st August, 1781, "for £6800, the value of two transport Ships, named the *Monarch* and *Venus*, lost on the Spanish Main," he on the 15th July, 1782, applied to ATKINSON for that justice, which had been extorted from him by COULSON.

ATKINSON, as usual, evaded, procrastinated, and thuffled. SPEDDING brought his action in October, 1782. ATKINSON retained the money during the vacation, and did not pay it, until a few days before the matter was to come to issue, in December following, when he paid it with interest and costs.

I am, Fellow Citizens,

Your real Well Wisher,

London, 29th March, 1784.

A J U R O R.